

FRANK G. CARPENTER'S LETTER.

# THE WORLD'S BIGGEST JAIL

IT IS ALL RANGOON, AND IT HAS 2500 TATTOOED CONVICTS.

Life in the Cells and Workshops—Our Correspondent Takes the Punishment of the Crank—How the Prisoners Are Fed—The Treadmill Abolished, But Flogging Permitted—Exercising With Cannon Balls—Convict Cheap Labor in Burma—The Police and the Courts—In Jail for Debt.

(Copyright, 1910, by Frank G. Carpenter.)

RANGOON, India, March 16.—The biggest jail in the world is here at Rangoon. It has a capacity of more than 4000 convicts, and there are 2500 incarcerated in it. The jail is situated right in the heart of this city of 200,000. Its blue colored brick walls are 20 feet high and they enclose many acres. Upon their corners are watch towers in which dark bearded, brown faced East Indian soldiers, with great yellow turbans on their black heads, stand day and night ready to shoot down the prisoner who attempts to escape. There are other watch houses midway between and others scattered throughout the vast inclosure, keeping prisoners under surveillance both day and night. A squad of soldiers was drilling in front of the entrance when I drove up to it this morning, and inside the jail I found guards everywhere.

I was able to visit the institution through a note of introduction from the lieutenant governor of Burma, and Capt. Knapp, the superintendent, gave orders that I was to be shown every part of it and allowed to make such photographs as I wished.

I was accompanied by one of two Burmese clerks of the main office, a bright young fellow with yellow face, brown eyes and black hair about which a pink turban was tied. He wore a khaki jacket and below this a silk skirt, wound tightly about the legs from waist to ankles. He was known to all the officials, and at his word all doors were opened and all cells unlocked. We walked together through ward after ward and visited the workshops, where more than 2000 criminals labor from 6 in the morning until 6 in the afternoon, as they serve out the sentences.

Among the Incurables.

The first division we entered was the one devoted to the incurables. The most of the prisoners, as I shall show later, labor in companies, side by side, in great shops of various kinds. In this ward every man worked alone in his cell, shut in by thick walls. He could not see nor hear anything but the sorrowful shriek of the machinery which himself and his fellows were operating, and these noises sounded to me like the wails of the damned. Imagine a long hall 15 feet wide, upon which perhaps three score cells opened. Each cell is about the size of a hall bedroom, lighted by a grated window up under the roof, so high that the man cannot see out. The cell is walled and floored with cement, and its only furniture is a low bench about two feet wide and eight inches high, with a coarse blanket upon it. This is with a coarse blanket upon it. This is

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This prescription comes from a physician who has made a special study of men and I am convinced it is the surest acting combination for the cure of deficient manhood and vigor failure ever put together.

I think I owe it to my fellow man to send them a copy in confidence so that any man anywhere who is weak and discouraged with repeated failures may stop struggling himself with harmful patent medicines, secure what I believe is the quickest acting restorative, upbuilding, SPOT TOUCHING remedy ever devised, and so cure himself at home quietly and quickly. Just drop me a line like this: Dr. A. E. Robinson, 4049 Luck Building, Detroit, Mich., and I will send you a copy of this splendid recipe in a plain ordinary envelope free of charge. A great many doctors would charge \$100 to \$500 for merely writing out a prescription like this but I send it entirely free.

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lars similar to these they had on their necks.

All Done by Hand.

Machinery has a small part in the work of this prison. Human muscle does the rest. The flour used in the kitchens is ground between millstones turned by men who sweat as they drag them around. I saw a gang at such work, and was told that each was expected to make and clean about 50 pounds of flour daily. The sweat stood on their brown skins as they worked, and they toiled hard at the grinding.

On my way through the yards I saw the pump working. The water in the jail is raised by great barrel like wheels so hung that as they turn they dip down into the water. To the rims of the wheels buckets are attached. These fill as the wheel enters the water, rise to the top as it goes onward, and empty out into a trough when it is turned over. The motive power for each of these wheels is a half dozen convicts, who, one on to a bar overhead, stepped ever upward, their weight turning the wheel.

The Treadmill Abolished.

This work was in the open, and it did not make a continuous noise. The treadmill that is now at work in the jail. The great saw and planing mill tread arrangement is still in existence, but it is idle, having been displaced by the pump. It was actively working when I visited this Rangoon jail 20 years ago, and in the eye of my mind I can still see the picture of the convicts then toiling. This treadmill arrangement was running a large planing mill with all its accompaniment, as well as other shops containing machinery.

It operated a buzz saw and scores of machines run by pulleys and steam engine. Imagine a long narrow room about 30 feet wide, in which six great cogwheels 12 feet in diameter are so fitted together that they make a continuous wheel 100 feet long, running from one end of the room to the other. Let the cogs of this wheel be boards half an inch thick, so made that they form a set of steps upon which men standing by their weight, make the wheel move. There is a bar above to which the men can hold, and to which they can, if necessary, be chained to keep them at work. When I was here I saw 150 men on only in waist cloths, holding on to that bar, and walking up, up, turning the wheel as they did so, and so by their weight running the machine shops and the planing mill. The men so running were mostly incorrigibles, who had committed terrible crimes. They all had chains on their legs, but the chains were tied to their waist cloths to relieve their ankles. Several of the convicts had their hands fastened to the bar overhead, and all were forced to keep turning the unusual jangle of their iron bound legs.

The Cannon Ball Drill.

As far as I can learn, the prisoners are now well treated. I saw no flogging, and there is no cruelty worth mentioning. One of the severest punishments I saw was a gang of four men exercising with cannon balls. This is imposed upon men who cannot be controlled in other ways. Each man had a cannon ball weighing 32 pounds in his hands, and at the top of the guard post he made certain motions. The four men worked in unison. As the guard pounded the gong they lifted the shot from the ground. Another tap and they held it close to their waists, another and they raised it to their shoulders, and then it went as high up into the air as their two hands could reach. Other signals caused them to lower it slowly, until it again reached the ground. There was a motion for each tap of the gong, and the work went on for hours at a time. I am told that the fatigue soon became terrible, and that the men will welcome any other punishment to escape this.

A Well Managed Prison.

The Rangoon prison is excellently planned and well managed. The buildings are great sheds of one and two stories, running out like the spokes of a wheel from a circle, in which the guards stand, so that they can inspect a half dozen or more shops at one time. The dormitories are arranged the same. Everything is clean and sanitary, the prison death rate being only 16 per thousand. Among the jail institutions is a large garden, where anti-scorbutic vegetables are raised for the prisoners, nearly all such food being produced inside the jail.

During my stay I spent much time in the workshops. They include almost every industry known to the Burman and are a living example of the skill of these people. There is a large printing office. They about 500 presses, and there are fully that many convicts at work there and in the type foundries and engraving establishments nearby. Each printer has an iron collar on his neck and iron rings on his ankles. This is the case throughout the whole jail.

Making Convict Goods.

Next to the printing establishment is a large carpenter and cabinet making shop, and farther on are rooms where the criminals carve wood and weave wicker furniture. This work is very profitable. They next went by groups of tailors and color rope makers, who work out in the open. All these dropped their work and folded their hands as we passed.

As to the earnings of the prisoners. They are considerable. Most of the criminals are sentenced to hard labor, and the expenses of the jails are largely paid by the sales of their work. They about 500 presses, and there are fully that many convicts at work there and in the type foundries and engraving establishments nearby. Each printer has an iron collar on his neck and iron rings on his ankles. This is the case throughout the whole jail.

Better Than Spanking.

Spanking does not cure children of bad habits. There is a constitutional cause for this trouble. Mrs. M. Summers, Box W, Notre Dame, Ind., will send free to any mother her successful home treatment, will full instructions. Send no money, but write her today if your children trouble you in this way. Don't blame the child, the chances are it can't help it. This treatment also cures adults and aged people troubled with urine difficulties by day or night.

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Produces thick, lustrant hair when all other remedies fail. We guarantee Danderine. All Druggists, 25c. 50c and \$1.00. Send this ad with the stamps or silver for a large free sample.  
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fairly good prisoners. They are high strung and proud and will fight at the drop of a hat. They are not backward about getting into trouble, but once in jail are amenable to the laws. The number of convicts is large in comparison with the population of the country. The jail population is now more than one to the thousand of the actual number of citizens. This includes what are known as the civil prisoners—men who have been incarcerated for debt. There is a special department of the Rangoon jail for such offenders. They are allowed a certain amount of money for rations, each man doing his own cooking.

Police and Crimes.

It takes something like 16,000 military policemen to keep the Burmese people in order, and in addition there is a civil police which numbers about 14,000. The military police has European officers in command of each battalion, and the men are largely East Indians. The native Burmese do not make good policemen, although some of the natives of the hill tribes have proved fairly good.

As to the civil police, every district has its own force, made up of the natives. Training schools for such men have been established in many localities, and the British are endeavoring to make the native police themselves. As it is, crimes of violence are decreasing, although thefts of cattle and other things are still common. A close watch is kept upon all vagrants, and villages are fined if they harbor criminals or do not maintain a good police force. The system of keeping a record of bad characters by photographs and finger prints is well known here, and many of the natives have been detected thereby.

The Counts of Farther India.

The British have established good courts all over Burma. The laws in force are modeled upon those of India and upon the statutes of England, as well as upon the laws of the Hindus and Mohammedans. In every case the judges take into consideration the native customs and rules of the tribe or caste to which the criminal belongs, and through these and equity justice is fairly well administered. The costs of the courts are, now more than a million dollars a year, and litigation is said to be decreasing.

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